

June 6, 2016 [View this email in your browser](#)



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS



Save the Date! NARC's 2016 Executive Directors Conference and Board Retreat

September 18-21 – South Bend, Indiana

More details in the Events section.

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Overview

The Senate will begin deliberations on the defense authorization legislation. Senate appropriators will work on the Labor-HHS-Education funding bill. Members of the Senate Budget Committee will meet with former chairs to identify options for overhauling the federal budget process. On Wednesday, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx will testify before a Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation hearing on the implementation of the FAST Act.

The House will deliberate on legislation to provide more staffing for the Transportation Security Administration to reduce airport wait times. Lawmakers are expected to reauthorize federal pipeline safety programs and legislation. The House is expected to consider an amendment (**S 2276**) to a measure that would reauthorize federal pipeline safety programs, as well as a bill (**HR**

4775) that gives states additional time to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ozone standards and change EPA's air quality standards review cycle from every five years to every ten years, requiring EPA to consider technical feasibility when it comes up with new air standards.

Budget and Appropriations

Congress returns from Memorial Day to a truncated schedule to adopt FY 2017 spending bills and will be forced to develop a stopgap bill to keep the government spending at current levels when the fiscal year ends on September 30. Bickering over funding to fight the Zika virus continues. The virus has now been diagnosed in almost every state, including the first USA-born baby with Zika-caused microcephaly. At issue is whether the funds should be pulled from existing funds or from emergency spending.

Update on Transportation-HUD Appropriations

The full Senate passed the Transportation-HUD bill by a vote of 89-8 on May 19. The bill provides \$56.5 billion in discretionary funding, cutting \$827 million from current spending levels. NARC priorities included:

- \$525 million for TIGER grants (\$25 million increase over FY16 levels),
- \$2.338 billion for the transit capital improvement program (an increase of \$161 million), and
- \$44 billion for highways (which fully funds the FAST Act and increases FY16 levels by \$905 million).

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs were funded at \$39.2 billion, including:

- \$3.0 billion for CDBG (equal to FY16),
- \$950 million for the HOME program (equal to FY16), and
- \$6.6 billion for Public Housing (\$200 million above FY16).

The Senate rejected, by a vote of 60-37, an amendment offered by Senators Lee (R-UT) and Cotton (R-AK) that would have blocked HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) rule. After the amendment was defeated, Senator Collins (R-NH) offered an amendment that made it clear that the AFFH rule does not provide local zoning authority to HUD; that amendment was adopted by an 87-9 vote.

Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Committee gave its approval to the Transportation-HUD bill on May 24. Unlike the Senate, the House bill included:

- \$450 million for TIGER grants (\$50 million less than FY16 and \$75 million less than Senate-passed bill),
- \$2.5 billion for the transit capital improvement program (\$323 million more than FY16 and \$161 million above the Senate bill) and includes language that restricts new full funding agreements with a federal cost share greater than 50 percent, and
- \$44 billion for highways (equal to Senate-passed bill).

HUD programs were funded at \$38.6 billion and, like the Senate, includes level funding for the CDBG and HOME programs, and \$6.4 billion for public housing (equal to the FY16 and \$200 million less than the Senate bill). Also, there is no AFFH provision in the House bill. At this time it is unclear when the full House will take up the Transportation-HUD bill.

The Senate FY17 Transportation-HUD Appropriations bill includes a provision rescinding \$2.2 billion in unobligated Highway Trust Fund contract authority. While it appears that none of the Surface Transportation Program funds allocated to large MPOs are included in this provision, there is some concern over efforts to include these funds in the rescission. NARC is working with other local government organizations to craft an appropriate response.

FEMA Encourages Preparedness for the 2016 Hurricane Season

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released a statement encouraging families and individuals to prepare early for the 2016 Atlantic Hurricane season. FEMA listed four steps people should take to help them be ready for any future storm that poses potential or actual dangers. The steps include becoming **aware of the risks** their **region** will most likely encounter, familiarizing themselves with **evacuation zones** and routes in order to evacuate promptly if emergency officials give the order to do so, downloading the **FEMA app** to receive alerts, tips, and access to information and resources, and creating a **family communication plan and emergency supply kit** to **stay in contact** with one another and **have provisions** for at least 72 hours.

The Federal Budget Explained

Last year, the federal government spent nearly **\$3.7 trillion**, roughly one out of every five dollars in the U.S. economy. Read on for a glimpse into how the government spent and earned its money in 2015.

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

FEATURED JOBS

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Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Associate Planner

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

AirCheck Texas Inspector

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Senior Air Quality Planner

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Regional Economist

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Operations Manager

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Accounting Intern

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Finance Intern

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

Contract Specialist

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

AirCheck Texas Assistant

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

NARC Webinar! Census Business Builder Demo

June 9, 12:30 – 1:30 PM ET

The Census Business Builder: Regional Analyst Edition is a new suite of economic and demographic data tools that allow for quick analysis of a region's economy and demographic profile. The tool allows users to build a region by aggregating counties in an easy to use map interface. Over 80 Census demographic and economic data variables are available, and the results

can be viewed in the map or in report form. *The Census Business Builder: Small Business Edition* tool allows small business entrepreneurs to research information for opening a first business or expanding existing ones, and allows users to pick from over 50 business types and view economic and demographic data that can help them select the right location for their business. Join this NARC and Census Bureau webinar to learn how to access and use these great tools.

NACo to Host Virtual Town Hall Series on the Local Response to the Opioid Crisis

June 9, 2:00 PM ET, Prevention & Education

June 16, 2:00 PM ET, Treatment

June 30, 2:00 PM ET, Public Safety

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has put together a three-part virtual town hall series to address the ongoing opioid crisis in communities across the country and discuss various aspects of the local response. Members of NACo will speak with national experts and appointees on the **National City-County Opioid Task Force**.

Supreme Court Redistricting Cases

July 12, 12:00 PM ET

It is a banner year in the Supreme Court for redistricting cases! Aside from *Evenwel v. Abbott*, holding that states may redraw legislative districts based on total population, the Court decided three other redistricting cases that will be important for the 2020 redistricting cycle. Rick Hasen, University of California Irvine School of Law, will provide a brief overview of redistricting law as it relates to the cases. Bruce Adelson, Federal Compliance Consulting, and Mark Packman, Gilbert LLP, will discuss the cases and how they will affect redistricting.

Supreme Court Review for State and Local Government

July 19, 1:00 PM ET

From immigration to abortion and bribery to retaliation, the Supreme Court's term has been interesting for state and local government. Discuss where the Court landed on the big issues and what state and local governments need to do next with Erin Murphy, Bancroft, Quin Sorenson, Sidley Austin, and Brent Kendall, *Wall Street Journal*.

Save the Date! NARC's 2016 Executive Directors Conference and Board Retreat

September 18-21 – South Bend, IN

Please join NARC and the Michiana Area Council of Governments this September in South Bend, IN for the annual Executive Directors Conference that is designed by and for Executive Directors of Councils of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organizations. This intimate conference brings executives together to discuss topics ranging from human resources and succession planning to what's new on the technological horizon. The conference also provides a great opportunity for networking and sharing of information on best practices. This year's conference will start with a reception on Sunday night and end with the Board of Directors Retreat on Wednesday. The Board Dinner will be Tuesday evening, time and location TBD. **Note:** *Please plan to arrive on Sunday, September 18 as we will not have hotel rooms available on Saturday night.*

CONTACT US

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